

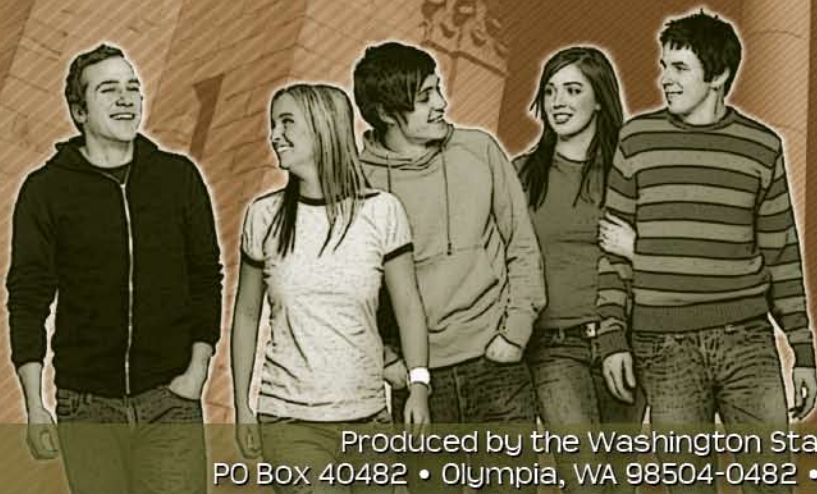


Washington  
State

*Hey, it's your legislature too.*

[www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)

# A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE LEGISLATURE



Produced by the Washington State Legislature  
PO Box 40482 • Olympia, WA 98504-0482 • Phone: (360) 786-7550



# Your Legislature



1. What is the minimum age for minors to work? ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
2. Can teenagers drive between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. without an adult passenger? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Is your cat or dog required to have rabies shots? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. There are two types of lawmakers in the Washington Legislature. What are they called? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many legislative districts does Washington have? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many lawmakers represent each district? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Jane Smith is 22 years old and has lived in Snohomish County for ten years. She has never registered to vote. Her uncle was a senator in 1965. Can she run for the Legislature? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Refer to the legislative district map on page 11 of this book to find the following information: in which district do you live? Who is your senator and who are your representatives? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Why do legislative committees hold hearings? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who presides over the Senate? Who presides over the House? \_\_\_\_\_

The answers to these questions are determined by “rules” or laws which people must follow. These “rules” are created by lawmakers in your state Legislature who are called senators and representatives.

Like almost every other state in the union, Washington has two legislative chambers—the Senate and House of Representatives. Nebraska is the only state which has just one legislative chamber called a unicameral legislature.

Senators are elected by the voters to a four-year term, and state representatives are elected for two years. To be a senator or representative, you must be at least 18 years old, live in your legislative district, and be a registered voter.

There are 49 legislative districts in Washington State. You live in one of these districts along with approximately 100,000 other people! Each district elects one senator and two representatives to the Legislature. Therefore, the Senate has 49 members and there are 98 representatives in the House.

The Washington State Legislature is a citizen legislature, which means most of its members have other careers or jobs besides serving in the Legislature, such as being a nurse, electrician, or teacher.

There is a special citizens’ committee which sets legislators’ salaries.

Our state Constitution says that the Legislature will meet every year, beginning on the second Monday of January. These are known as regular sessions. It meets for 60 days during even-numbered years and 105 days during odd-numbered years.

It meets longer in the odd-numbered years because it must pass a state budget.

Sometimes legislators are called back to Olympia for “special sessions,” which usually are held between regular sessions to handle emergencies.

The Legislature has committees, or small groups of senators or representatives, which review proposed laws and study issues. Many bills introduced in the Legislature receive a public hearing. Hearings give citizens a

chance to present their opinions about proposed laws.

When you visit the Senate and House chambers in the State Capitol, you may see senators and representatives in session. You may also see the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, Sergeant-at-Arms, or Pages.

The Lieutenant Governor is elected by all Washington voters and serves as president of the Senate and presides over daily Senate activity. The Speaker of the House is a member of the House of Representatives who has been chosen by members of the House to preside over the House floor action and debate. The

Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for security in the chambers and at public hearings. The students wearing colored jackets are legislative pages who assist legislators and staff by

running errands.

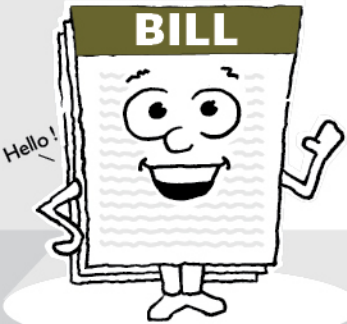
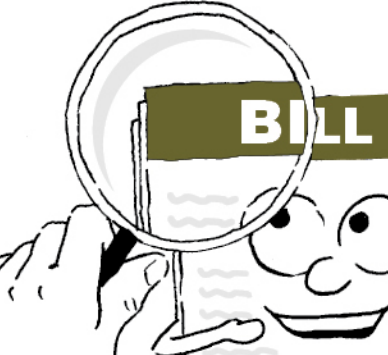

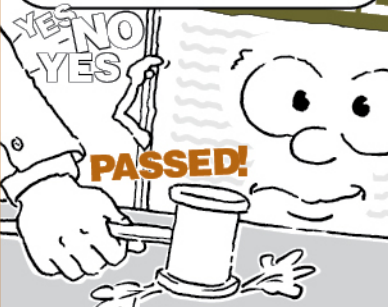
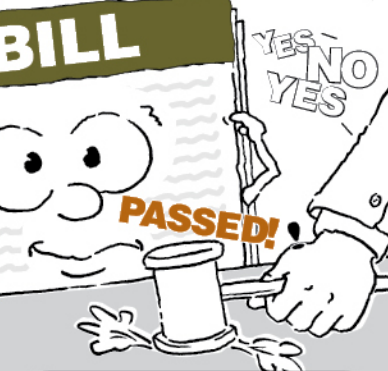
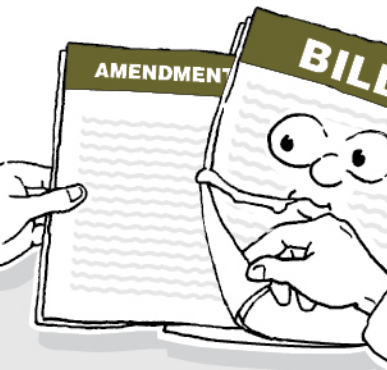
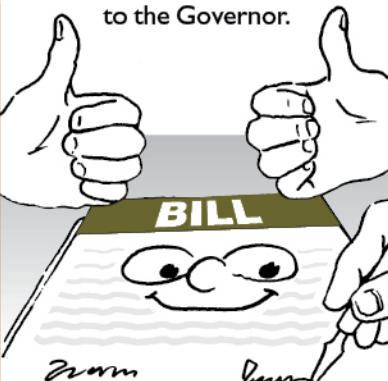
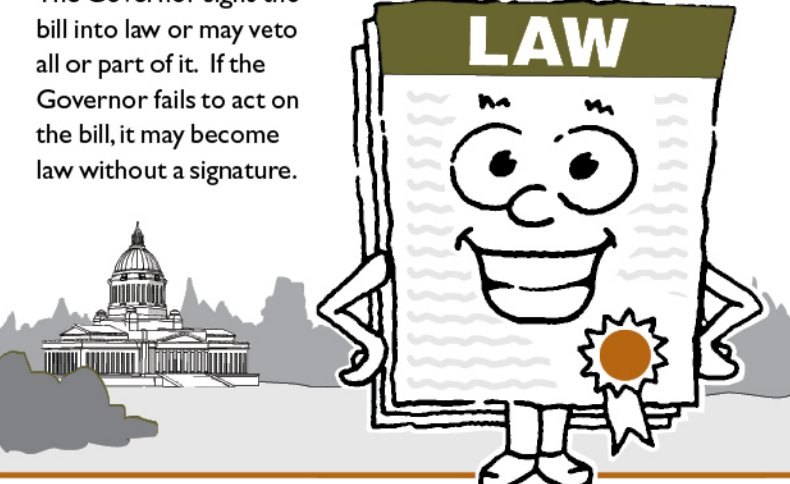
You may speak to or write your legislators, testify at a public hearing, or ask for information about the legislative process or a specific bill. They will appreciate hearing from you because you have an important role in the formation of Washington’s laws.



(The answers are on the back cover)



# How a Bill Becomes A Law

<p>A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives.</p> 	<p>A committee studies the bill and often holds public hearings on it.</p> 	<p>A committee report is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.</p>  <p>The Rules Committee can either place the bill on the second reading of the calendar for debate before the entire body, or take no action.</p>
<p>At the second reading a bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage.</p> 	 <p>After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.</p>	 <p>If amendments are made in one house, the other house must concur.</p>
<p>When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the Governor.</p> 	<p>The Governor signs the bill into law or may veto all or part of it. If the Governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature.</p> 	



# Legislative Terms

**Adjourn** – to conclude a day's session or committee meeting.

**Amendment** – a proposal offered to a legislative bill that changes the original language.

**Bill** – a proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.

**Budget** – a legislative document that states the amount of money to be spent on programs and services.

**Caucus** – a group of people belonging to the same political party to select leaders and discuss issues and policy.

**Committee** – a panel of senators or representatives which makes preliminary decisions about legislation or other issues and reports its findings to the entire legislative body.

**Committee Chair** – a legislator chosen to direct the activities of a committee. Committee chairs normally are approved every two years by a vote of either the Senate or House.

**Constitution** – a document which states the basic principles and laws of the state that determine the powers and duties of government and guarantee certain rights to Washington citizens. Our Constitution was adopted in 1889.

**Constitutional Amendment** – similar to a legislative bill, a constitutional amendment is a proposal to change the state's Constitution that must be passed by the Legislature and approved by a vote of the citizens.

**Convene** – to assemble for an official meeting.

**District** – area represented by legislators. There are 49 legislative districts, each having one senator and two representatives.

**First Reading** – the introduction and first reading of a bill by the entire legislative body.

**Governor** – highest ranking state official.

**Hearing** – a regularly scheduled meeting of a committee at which the public has an opportunity to voice its opinions about proposed legislation.

**Interim** – the months between regular legislative sessions.

**Legislature** – the entire group of senators and representatives. They are elected by citizens to represent them in the creation and modification of laws for the state.

**Page** – the name given to students who are "helpers" to legislators and staff. Pages typically run errands and provide other assistance as needed. Persons who are good students between 14-15 years of age are eligible to become pages.

**President of the Senate** – another name for the Lieutenant Governor, who presides over Senate floor action and debate.

**Representative** – a citizen who is elected to the House of Representatives for a two-year term. There are 98 representatives in Washington.

**Second Reading** – bills on second reading are subject to debate and may be amended, returned to committee, or advanced to Third Reading.

**Senator** – a citizen who is elected to the Senate for a four-year term. There are 49 senators in Washington.

**Sergeant-at-Arms** – these employees are responsible for security during legislative sessions and public hearings.

**Speaker** – representative who is elected by the members of the House of Representatives to preside over House floor action and debate.

**Special Session** – a legislative session that is usually held for a specific purpose and occurs between regularly scheduled sessions. A special session may be called to order by the Governor or by a vote of two-thirds of both houses of the Legislature.

**Sponsor** – the senator or representative who presents a bill, resolution or amendment for consideration.

**Third Reading** – the final stage of a bill during which the document is read in its entirety and a vote is taken.

**Veto** – return of a bill by the Governor to the Legislature without his or her signature, usually accompanied by an explanation as to why the Governor thinks the bill should not become a law.

**Veto Override** – a two-thirds vote of the Legislature (33 votes in the Senate, and 66 votes in the House) which makes law any bill vetoed by the Governor.

**Washington** – the name given to the 42nd state in the United States of America. Our state is named after our first president, George Washington.

NOTES:

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# Word Search

(Search for these legislative terms in the letters below. They may appear in all directions: forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally in the puzzle. Find each word and draw a circle around it like the sample shown.)

Amendment	Chamber	Constitution	✓ Budget	Speaker
Hearing	Bill	Override	Governor	Page
Law	Senator	Session	Representative	Vote

R	C	K	J	N	O	I	S	S	E	S	M
E	E	H	O	W	P	M	B	I	U	R	A
V	P	W	A	M	E	N	D	M	E	N	T
I	G	N	R	M	T	S	I	V	E	Z	X
T	Y	R	F	O	B	A	N	S	C	B	I
A	P	A	N	E	I	E	T	E	Y	K	N
T	H	W	T	X	L	F	R	N	T	O	G
N	I	O	R	C	L	B	O	A	I	V	A
E	V	Z	E	A	R	H	D	T	E	E	B
S	U	Y	K	B	O	M	U	O	Y	R	W
E	E	G	A	P	W	T	C	R	K	R	A
R	C	O	E	A	I	V	E	B	X	I	L
P	P	I	P	T	Q	X	R	U	H	D	S
E	L	W	S	V	A	Z	I	K	C	E	A
R	G	N	I	R	A	E	H	B	F	V	H
M	O	T	Y	H	M	B	U	D	G	E	T
C	Y	K	G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R	E

(The answers are on the back cover)



# Matching

(Match the answers on the left with the definitions on the right.)

Lieutenant Governor

Legislative session held between regular sessions, usually to handle emergencies.

First Reading

As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate.

Special Session

The final stage of a bill during which the document is read in its entirety and a vote is taken.

49

When a bill is introduced and read to the Legislature for the first time.

Sergeant-at-Arms

The number of legislative districts in Washington State.

Third Reading

These people are responsible for security in hearings and the legislative chamber.

Committee

The length of a senator's term of office.

4 years

A group of senators or representatives which schedules hearings to study bills and receive public testimony.

Regular Session

The length of a representative's term of office.

Second Reading

The debating and amending stage for a legislative bill.

2 years

The annual meeting of the Legislature, beginning on the second Monday in January each year.

*(The correct answers are on the back cover)*



# Symbols of Washington State

## State Seal

In 1889, jeweler Charles Talcott designed our first state seal using an ink bottle, silver dollar and a postage stamp. Talcott's brother, L. Grant Talcott, lettered the words, "The Seal of the State of Washington, 1889," and another brother, G.N. Talcott, cut the printing die. More information can be found at the Secretary of State's Web site on the State Seal.



## State Flower

### Coast Rhododendron

In 1892, before they had the right to vote, Washington women selected the coast rhododendron as the state flower. They wanted an official flower to enter in a floral exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. Six flowers were considered, but the final decision was narrowed to clover and the "rhodie," and voting booths were set up for ladies throughout the state. When the ballots were counted, the rhododendron had been chosen as the Washington state flower. In 1959, the Legislature designated the native species, *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, as the official flower of the state of Washington.

## The State Flag

The state flag and the state seal are similar. Passed in 1923, Washington law describes the flag as having dark green bunting with a state seal in the center. In the late 1890s, a blue and gold military state flag with George Washington's profile on it flew over many cities and towns throughout the state. But when it came to a final decision, the current flag was adopted by the Legislature. According to law, the flag of the United States and the flag of the state shall be prominently installed, displayed and maintained in schools, court rooms and state buildings. For further information about the state flag, check the Secretary of State's web site.

## State Tree

### Western Hemlock

In 1946, an Oregon newspaper teased Washington for not having a

state tree. The Portland Oregonian picked out the western hemlock, *Tsuga heterophylla* for us, but Washington newspapers decided to choose their own and selected the popular western red cedar. State Representative George Adams of Mason County pleaded with the Legislature to adopt the western hemlock. The hemlock, he said, would become "the backbone of this state's forest industry." Adams' bill passed the Legislature and was signed into law in 1947.

## State Bird

### Willow Goldfinch

The goldfinch is a delicate little bird with a yellow body and black wings, and although it eventually became the official state bird, many other birds were considered for the title. In 1928, legislators let school children select the state bird and the meadowlark won hands-down. It was a nice choice but seven other states already had chosen the same bird. Another vote was taken in 1931 by the Washington Federation of Women's Clubs. Many birds were nominated, but the goldfinch won handily over the tanager, song sparrow, junco and pileated woodpecker. Now there were two state birds and the Legislature decided to leave the final choice to school children. In 1951, children voted for the goldfinch and the Legislature made it unanimous.



## State Song

### "Washington, My Home"

The state song, "Washington, My Home," was written by Helen Davis, arranged by Stuart Churchill, and became the official state song in 1959. But, like the goldfinch, it had some stiff competition from another popular song. Back in 1909, "Washington Beloved" was adopted, sort of, by the Legislature. Professor Edmond Meany, the historian, wrote the words and Reginald de Koven, who also wrote "O Promise Me" and other operettas, wrote the music. But the official designation for the song was

never formally introduced as a bill and so was not part of the state's code of law. When a state senator from South Bend introduced a bill in 1959 to make "Washington, My Home" our state song, it was approved unanimously.

## State Fish

### Steelhead Trout

The steelhead trout is an anadromous fish, meaning it returns to fresh water rivers to spawn. The scales of the steelhead shine flecks of silver with a gray spotted back from head to tail and an intensely white belly; the two colors separated by a hint of opalescent pink. Steelhead trout is one of the most popular fish for recreational fishing, a major industry in Washington State. The steelhead trout (*Salmo gairdnerii*) was adopted by the Legislature as a state symbol in 1969.

## State Gem

### Petrified Wood

The geological history of our state has encompassed many great changes, one of them being the many lava flows from volcanic fissures. Centuries ago, the interior of Washington was swampy and mild with many trees such as cypress, oak, elm and ginkgo growing in wet areas. Layers of logs were preserved with each new lava flow, and as the layers grew deeper, many of the logs became waterlogged and lay protected in deep water. Over time, water continued to seep through the lava and permeate the wood with silica. Eventually, the wood fiber was completely replaced by silica, thus petrifying many logs. The petrified wood is perfect in form and detail to the original wood. In 1975, petrified wood was adopted as the state gem. The best place to see petrified wood is the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park in Vantage.

## State Dance

### Square Dance

On April 17, 1979, the square dance became the official Washington state dance. When the pioneers came west,



they brought with them a dance called the quadrille, which means square in French. The pioneers liked the simpler term and so the square dance was born. The dance is known for its series of figures and footwork. Dancers are directed by a caller. It is easy to learn, a good form of exercise, and fun.

## State Folk Song

### "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On"

In the early 1940s, the federal Bonneville Power Administration produced a movie encouraging rural residents in the Pacific Northwest to electrify their homes and farms with the power being generated by the newly-built Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams on the Columbia River. As part of the project, BPA hired folksinger Woody Guthrie at \$270 for 30 days to write songs for the movie. Guthrie wrote 26 songs, the most popular of which was "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On," an ode to the harnessing of Washington's mightiest river. It was approved as the official Washington state folk song by the Legislature in 1987.

## State Fruit

### Apple

Washington is the nation's top apple-producing state, so it is appropriate that the apple was named a state symbol in 1989, the centennial year. A favorite fruit around the world, the apple comes in many different colors, sizes and varieties. From the beautiful blossoms of spring, to the heavily laden branches in autumn, the apple trees of eastern Washington represent one of the largest industries in the state. The Washington apple is certainly one of the most recognized symbols of the state worldwide.



## State Grass

### Bluebunch Wheatgrass

Although many state symbols are readily identifiable with the western part of the state, bluebunch wheatgrass is a state symbol that is unique to eastern Washington. Bluebunch wheatgrass was a blessing to Washington's pioneer farmers and continues to play a major role in our

agriculture industry today. It was adopted by the 1989 Legislature as the official state grass. Its botanical name is *Agropyron spicatum*.

## State Tartan

A tartan is a design for the weaving of cloth consisting of perpendicular bands of contrasting colors on a solid background. The Washington State Tartan was designed in 1988 by Vancouver, USA Country Dancers to commemorate the Washington State Centennial celebration. It is identified by the background color green, which represents the rich forests of Washington, the "Evergreen State." The perpendicular bands of contrasting colors represent the following features: blue for the lakes, rivers and ocean; white for the snow-capped mountains; red for the apple and cherry crops; yellow for the wheat and grain crops; and black for the eruption of Mount St. Helens. The bill, designating a state tartan, was signed into law in 1991. The Council of the Scottish Tartans Society also affixed its seal to the official Certificate of Accreditation in 1991.

## State Insect

### Green Darner Dragonfly

In 1997, the common green darner dragonfly, *Anax junius* Drury, became Washington's official state insect. Students from over 100 school districts statewide participated in the selection of the common green darner dragonfly. Also known as the "mosquito hawk," this insect can be found throughout Washington and is a beneficial contributor to the ecosystem because it consumes a large number of insect pests. It is easily recognizable by its bright green head and thorax, it has a four to six-inch wingspan and can fly 25 to 35 miles per hour. There are over 400 different species of dragonflies. Dragonflies existed prior to the dinosaur age and some had up to a three-foot wing span. "Darner" is one family of dragonflies and the common green was first sighted and recorded by Drury in 1773.



## State Fossil

### Columbian Mammoth

Following a four-year effort by students to have this behemoth

designated as our state fossil, the Legislature recognized in 1998 that the large, hairy prehistoric elephants of the extinct genus *Mammuthus* roamed the North American continent, including the Pacific Northwest, during the Pleistocene epoch (ice ages). Mammoth is the common name given to any member of an extinct genus *Mammuthus* of the elephant family. The first North American mammoths migrated across the Bering Strait from Asia down through Alaska about two million years ago. Nearly all mammoths died out about 10,000 years ago. From studies based on deposits of the Columbian mammoths, *M. columbi*, it is clear that grasses featured prominently in their diets. The maximum life expectancy of the mammoth would have been 60 to 65 years. The males grew to the size of modern adult elephants; females were about half that size. Several years ago, fossils of the Columbian mammoth were found on the Olympic Peninsula.

## State Marine Mammal

### Orca Whale

As a result of two years of research and persuasion by students, the Legislature designated the orca, *Orcinus orca*, as the official marine mammal of the state of Washington in 2005. Many people visit Washington state to watch orcas; the orca is a significant symbol for the Native American culture; there are pods of orcas that migrate annually through Puget Sound; and the orca is easily recognizable because of its distinct markings. The designation is intended to promote orca awareness and to encourage protection of the natural marine habitat.



## State Vegetable

### Walla Walla Sweet Onion

In 2007, the Walla Walla sweet onion was designated as the official vegetable of the state of Washington.

The Walla Walla Sweet is from Walla Walla and is only grown properly in the Walla Walla Valley. This onion finds its origins on the island of Corsica. Over a





century ago, a retired French soldier found a sweet onion seed there and brought it to the Walla Walla Valley. The sweet onion had impressive winter hardiness well-suited for the climate of southeastern

Washington. Soon he and other immigrants in the area began harvesting the seed. After several generations of careful hand selection, the sweet onion developed greater sweetness, size, and shape. Today, there are many growers producing Walla Walla Sweet onions on farmland in the Walla Walla Valley. Sweet onion season is mid-June through September.

### State Amphibian

#### ***Pseudacris regilla***

In 2007, the Pacific chorus frog was designated as the official amphibian of the State of Washington.

Because Pacific chorus frogs live in every county in the state and on both sides of the Cascades, they are an excellent choice as an emblem for the whole state. The Pacific chorus frog is charming and makes beautiful sounds. Less than two inches long, they swell their throat sacs to three times the size of their heads to send their calls into the night. This amphibian is useful because it eats insects, including mosquitoes. It is recognizable by the black stripe through the eye to the shoulder, and can be brown, tan, grey or green. A native amphibian, it is preyed upon by bullfrogs, snakes, raccoons, shorebirds, hawks and ducks.

### State Ship

#### **Lady Washington**

The legislature designated the Lady Washington as the official ship of the state of Washington in 2007.

Built over a two-year period and launched on March 7, 1989, the ship was built in Aberdeen by the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority.

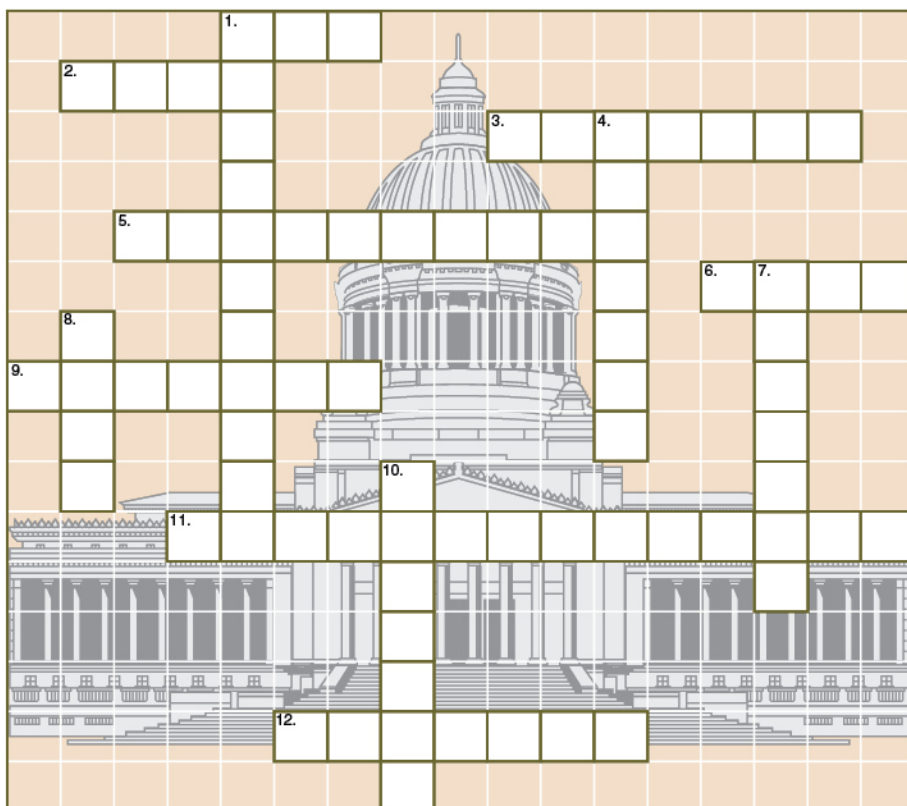


Master shipwrights from all over the Pacific Northwest constructed her near the confluence of the Wishkah and Chehalis rivers. The Lady Washington is based in Aberdeen.

A reproduction sailing ship of the original Washington/Lady Washington that sailed during approximately 1750-1798, the vessel type is a "brig," indicating the configuration of the sails.

The Office of the Secretary of State for the state of Washington holds a mortgage on the vessel to secure the investment of the people of Washington.

## Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS:

1. A "rule" created by the Legislature.
2. Student helper who runs errands.
3. To end the day's session or meeting.
5. The 42nd state of the United States.
6. A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.
9. Represents you in the Senate.
11. Person elected to the House
12. To assemble for an official meeting.

### DOWN:

1. Name given to the entire group of lawmakers.
4. The month when regular session begins.
7. The time between regular legislative sessions.
8. The rejection of a bill by the Governor.
10. A meeting where the public voices its opinions on a bill.

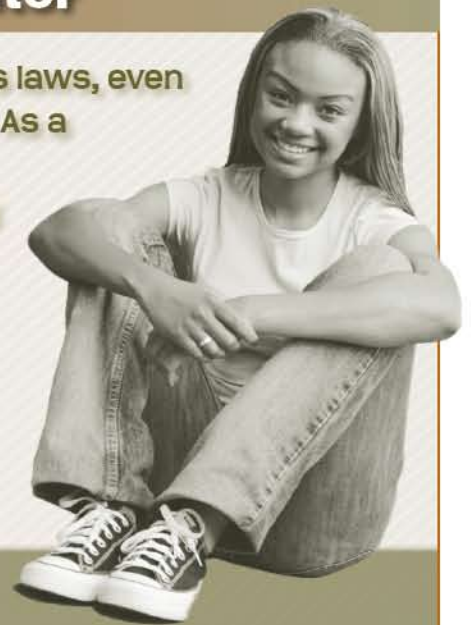
*(The correct answers are on the back cover)*



# Contacting Your Legislator

You have an important role in the formation of Washington's laws, even though you cannot vote until you are 18 years old. As a citizen, you may contact your state senator or representative about laws being considered by the Legislature, laws already in place, or an idea for a new law.

Legislators particularly enjoy hearing from students, so we encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with them.



## Write a Letter

One of the best ways to communicate is to write a letter. To do so, include your senator's or representative's name and one of the following addresses on a stamped envelope:

**For the Senate:**  
(Senator's Name)  
PO Box 40482  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

**For the House:**  
(Representative's Name)  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

## Call the Legislative Hotline

Washington is one of only a few states in the country with a toll-free legislative hotline. Some days our operators field as many as 1,200 phone calls!

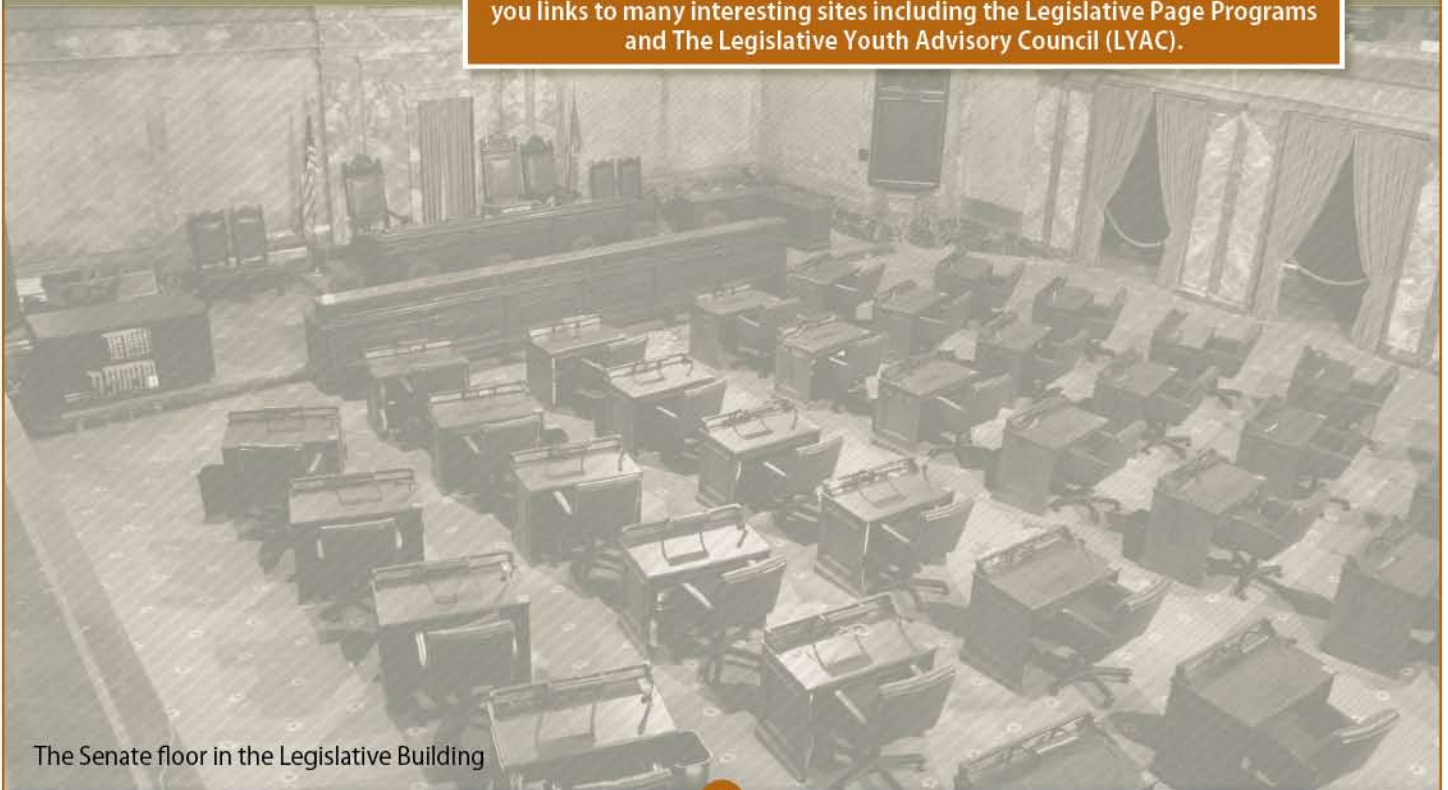
Call 1-800-562-6000 to reach helpful staff who will type up your message and send it to your legislators.

## Visit the Capitol Campus

We encourage you to personally visit the state capitol campus in Olympia. We have a tour office which can arrange a fun and interesting tour for your class or your family throughout the year.

It is best to give them as much advance notice as possible. They can be reached at (360) 586-TOUR.

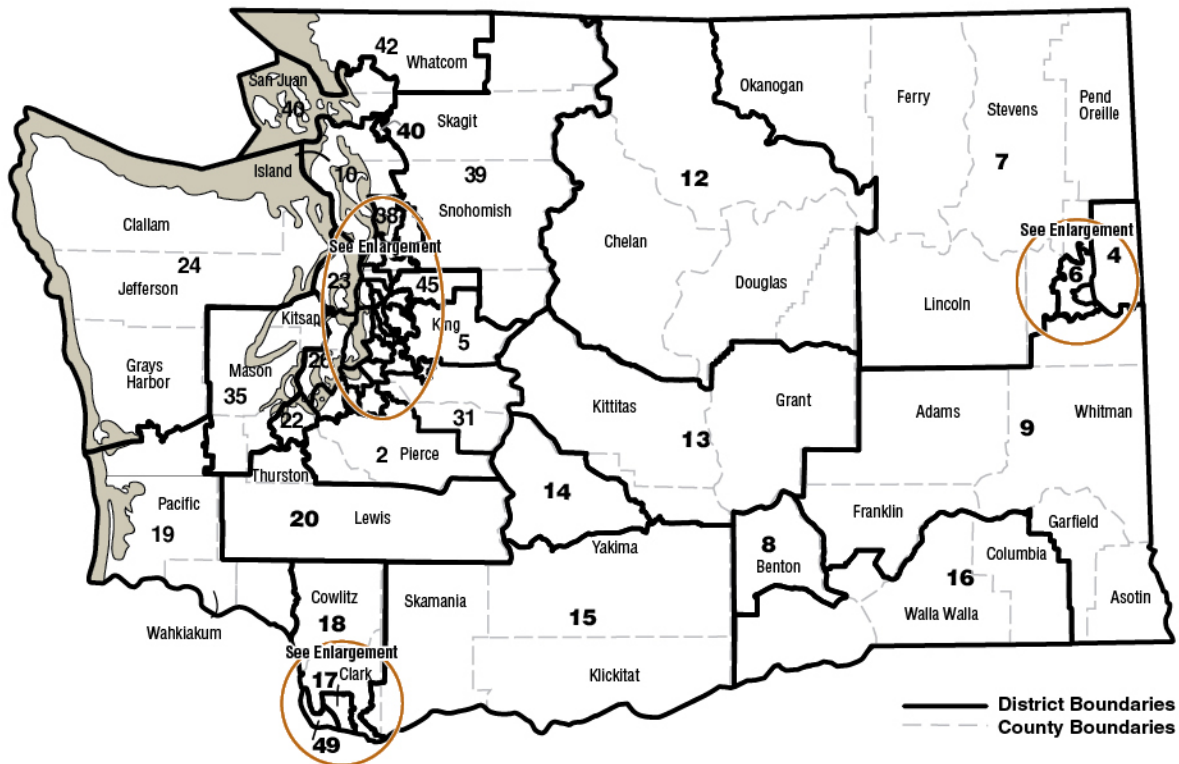
You also can visit the Legislature at our Internet Web site at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov). There is a student's homepage which will give you links to many interesting sites including the Legislative Page Programs and The Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC).



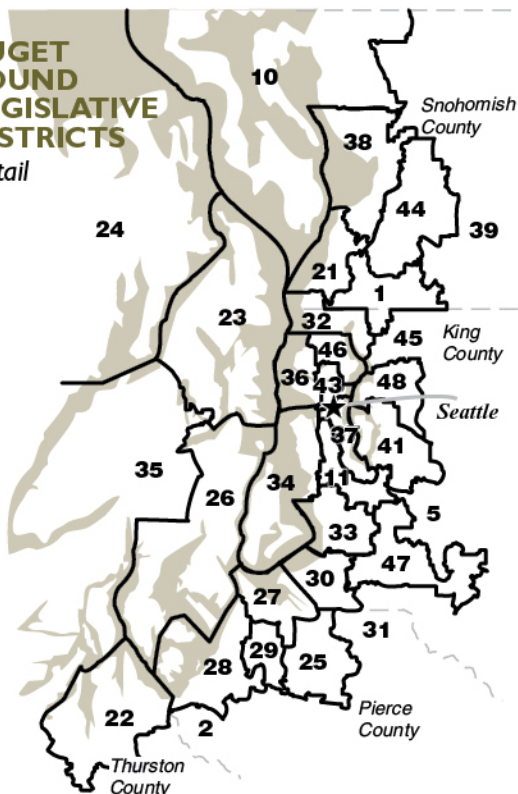
The Senate floor in the Legislative Building



# Legislative District Map



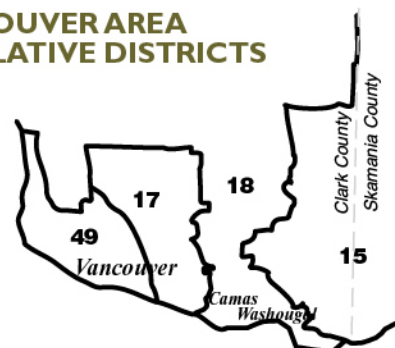
## PUGET SOUND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS Detail



## SPOKANE AREA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS Detail



## VANCOUVER AREA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS Detail



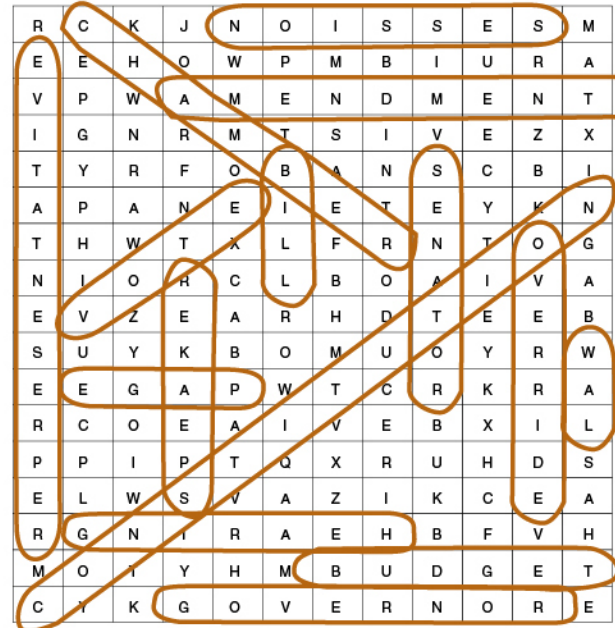


# Puzzle Keys

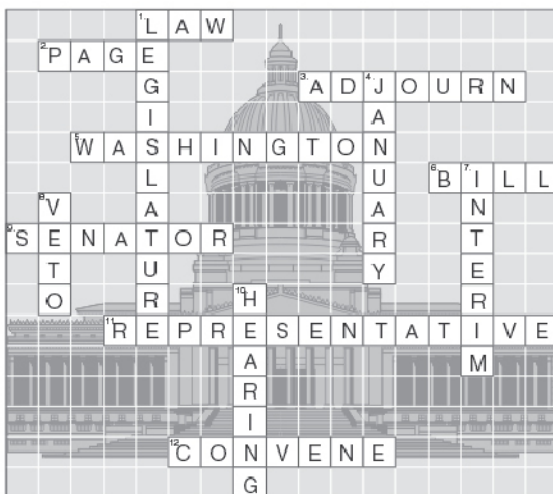
## Answers to questions on page 2:

- 14, except under special conditions.
- No.
- Yes.
- Senators and representatives.
- 49.
- One senator and two representatives.
- No, Jane Smith cannot run for the Legislature because she is not a registered voter.
- Refer to the legislative district map on page 11.
- Hearings are held to give senators and representatives a chance to study bills and give people an opportunity to testify and give their opinions on bills.
- The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate, and the Speaker presides over the House.

## Word Search



## Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS:

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7. The time between regular legislative sessions.
8. The rejection of a bill by the Governor.
10. A meeting where the public voices its opinions on a bill.

## Matching

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Lieutenant Governor</b> | Legislative session held between regular sessions to handle emergencies.                                     |
| <b>First Reading</b>       | As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate.  |
| <b>Special Session</b>     | The final stage of a bill during which the document is read in its entirety and a vote is taken.             |
| <b>49</b>                  | When a bill is introduced and read to the Legislature for the first time.                                    |
| <b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>    | The number of legislative districts in Washington State.   |
| <b>Third Reading</b>       | These people are responsible for security in hearings and the legislative chamber.                           |
| <b>Committee</b>           | The length of a senator's term of office.  |
| <b>4 years</b>             | A group of senators or representatives which schedules hearings to study bills and receive public testimony. |
| <b>Regular Session</b>     | The length of a representative's term of office.   |
| <b>Second Reading</b>      | The debating and amending stage for a legislative bill.  |
| <b>2 years</b>             | The annual meeting of the legislature, beginning on the second Monday in January each year.                  |